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Master's Thesis of Seungyeon Song

“We are Somewhat Competent”:
The Effect of Ambivalent Messages Used in
Promoting Pro-Environmental Brands

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“We are Somewhat Competent”:
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Abstract

The present article aims to reveal a successful way of delivering pro-environmental brand's competency information to consumers. Unlike other neutral brands, PE brands are often perceived to be high in warmth but low in competence by the general public. Thus, successfully conveying the brand's potential competency to consumers is a significant issue to be resolved. The present study investigates the effect of different attitude portrayed through brands' promotional messages on brand attitude. Moreover, one's dispositional persuasion knowledge is considered as a significant moderator when consumers understand and accept brands' promotional messages. The results indicate while those with high dispositional persuasion knowledge show positive brand attitude when the brand competency information is presented in ambivalent manner, those with low persuasion knowledge build positive brand attitude when the competency information is presented in univalent manner. The underlying mechanisms of the effect were examined as well. Perceived humility and credibility towards the brand serially mediated the effect. Overall, the current research proposes that PE brands could more successfully promote their brand competency when they adapt humble and credible behavior by portraying ambivalent attitude in their promotional messages.

Keyword : Ambivalent, Persuasion Knowledge, Humility, Credibility, Pro-Environmental Brands

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Chapter 1. Introduction

What are your core aspects when deciding which brand to buy from when all else such as price, quality, or reputation is equal? Do you consider your potential impacts on the environment when making a purchase decision? The Earth is running out of time.

Environmental concern and climate change are no longer an issue of the far future. It's a current ongoing crisis. Thus, numbers of companies are becoming more aware of such issues and hundreds of pro-environmental brands are coming into business. However, what's the point of launching pro-environmental brands when no consumer is persuaded to purchase from such brands and rather stick to conventional brands and purchase behaviors. The present study hopes to add on to the stream of researches in examining effective promotional strategies which could be utilized by pro-environmental brands in order to build positive brand attitude. Moreover, revealing the significant underlying mechanism that leads to positive brand attitude is also an important part of this study.

The main research question to be examined is to reveal an effective way of promoting pro-environmental brands (referred as PE brands hereafter). The present research investigates closely into whether brands' attitude convey through their brand descriptions (e.g., brand's online 'About-us' page) would influence how consumers feel about that PE brand in return. Understanding the unique feature of how PE brands must meet consumers' casual needs and wants as well as contribute in resolving environmental issues, classical way of promoting a business by emphasizing the strengths of the brand only may not be an effective way of promotion. Moreover, considering how consumers have different levels of dispositional persuasion knowledge when they encounter brand promotions, it would be worth to examine different ways of successfully appealing the

brand products to the general public and potential consumers.

Chapter 2. Theoretical Background and Hypotheses

2.1. Warmth and Competence Dimension

Like mentioned briefly above, PE brands possess a certain brand image by the public. They are often perceived as highly warm brand serving the Earth's needs but have low competency in regards of brand quality and technology (Chang 2011). Not restricted to PE brands only, all brands, both for-profit and non-profit are often evaluated upon the warmth and competence dimension by consumers (Fiske et al. 1999). The warmth of a brand consists of factors like perceived generosity, kindness, honesty, sincerity, helpfulness, trustworthiness, and thoughtfulness of the brand. On the other hand, competency consists of confidence, effectiveness, intelligence capabilities, skillfulness and competitiveness of the brand. The prevalent goal of most brands is to be perceived as high in both warmth and competence as its interactive relation leads to brand admiration (Fiske, Cuddy and Glick 2006). However, general public perceive for-profit companies as relatively high on competence compared to warmth and non-profit companies as the opposite on default (Newman, Gorlin and Dhar 2014). Thus, even though PE brands are type of social enterprises which by definition differ from non-profit organizations, people still perceive PE brands to lack in competence compared to warmth and perceive that they would lack in product quality as well. However, the true fact is, unlike the general public's perception towards PE brands, the only distinguishable aspect of PE brands from other neutral brands is that they serve pro-environmental impacts as their core value with all else equal.

Many prior articles have examined how warm brands could work on enhancing their competence and few of the suggestions include factors like building trust, running rigorous research and data-driven approaches (Liu and Aaker 2008), or using powerful images associated with competence such as money (Aaker, Garbinsky and Vohs 2013). Building upon this, we can assume that the biggest challenge of the PE brands is to convey their competency successfully to consumers in hope to positively increase brand attitude, support and sales.

Like mentioned, pro-environmental brands are perceived to be high in warmth on default, but people perceive their products to lack in quality which shows biased assumption of such brands to lack in competency. The zero-sum bias (Fiske et al. 2002) explains such assumption. Zero-sum bias indicates that resources gained by one party are matched by corresponding losses to another party. Thus, the emphasis on “pro-environment” which equals to high warmth may be signaling lack of resource allocation on its competency, such as quality or cost. Therefore, it would be interesting to examine how brand message could overcome such assumption. Moreover, it would be also worth to examine specifically *when* the competent information about PE brands could positively influence consumer’s attitude. This would be further discussed as boundary conditions in the later section.

The present study aimed to examine whether the attitude of the PE brand conveying their competent information in brand explanation message influence consumer’s brand attitude (including purchase intention and willingness to pay). Building upon the general public’s bias of perceiving PE brands to lack in quality and how consumers in general are ambivalent toward green products and buying them

despite their constant concern about the environment (Chang 2011), competent information of the PE brand presented in ambivalent manner by the brand may be an effective way of conveying the message due to ease of information processing which ultimately leads the brand to be perceived as humble and credible. Such findings would be significant because when consumers find a specific brand to be high in competence which they originally thought lacked in, consumers' desire to buy would increase to greater extent (Aaker, Vohs and Mogilner 2010). Moreover, this finding would be eligible in aiding to fill the gap between general public's concern towards and environmental issues and actual behavioral acts.

2.2. Ambivalence

Ambivalence is an attitudinal aspect. Having ambivalent attitude towards various objects and events refers to the state of one possessing both positive and negative attitude towards the target object (Priester and Petty 1996). The opposite of ambivalence is univalence which enforces one main attitude, either positive or negative, towards the target. Though ambivalence consists of both sides of attitude, it doesn't necessarily have to share exact amount of positivity or negativity. Simply having evaluative inconsistency towards and issue itself is termed as ambivalence (Katz 1980).

Ambivalence is often perceived to be an aversive state which people wish to resolve. Having two conflicting attitudes toward an object elicits uncomfortable feelings due to internal inconsistency and cognitive dissonance (Newby-Clark, McGregor and Zanna 2002; Reich and Wheeler 2016; Ramanathan and Williams 2007). Thus, people work to resolve the ambivalent attitude. However, many prior articles also emphasize

how ambivalence is not always aversive. For example, when the situation or an issue in which one encountered is controversial (vs. consensual), people tend to adopt ambivalent attitude (Pillaud, Cavazza Butera 2018). This could be done as means of self-protection (Reich and Wheeler 2016). Moreover, those who show ambivalence are considered to be more competent if the issue is highly controversial. Such effects signal that people try to corroborate their attitude to the default condition of the issue. Thus, considering the default ambivalence the general public has towards PE brands, the competent message presented in ambivalent manner would be more effective in conveying the message. This could be further supported by functional theory and explained through underlying mechanism of perceived humility and credibility.

Ambivalence vs. Two-Sided Message

Understanding how ambivalence consists of two different attitudes and applying this concept to a message may seem to be equivalent to two-sided messages. Many past articles have examined the effects of two-sided messages, however it's distinguishable from ambivalent messages. One recent study has revealed that two-sided messages only yield more positive attitudes and purchase intentions when the ambivalence provoked by the message is low (Cornelis, Heuvinck and Majmundar 2019). Moreover, two-sided message lead to greater attitude certainty when one has higher need for clarity and people consider such messages to be high in knowledge (Rucker, Petty and Briñol 2008). Also, the main difference from this construct to ambivalence is that two-sided message vs. one-sided message was manipulated by simply changing how a single message is framed. For example, Cornelis et al. (2009) presented the same set of all the positive and negative

information about the object under one “information category” for one-sided message while sorting the same positive and negative information into “pros and cons” section for two-sided message. Thus, substantively equivalent information was given to both conditions. However, presenting a message in ambivalent vs. univalent manner consists of actual manipulation of the content (Hohman, Crano and Niedbala, 2016). Therefore, ambivalent vs. univalent message framing differs from past studies conducted to examine two-sided messages. While no past study has specifically considered the brand’s attitude connoted in promotional text, understanding how human ambivalent attitude influence relationship, it seems worthwhile to examine the brand ambivalent attitude and its relation to consumers.

The present research predicts that presenting the competent information of the brand framed in ambivalent manner would be more persuasive due to perceived humility and credibility towards the brand. The following section would explain why this prediction may be valid and worth to study.

2.3. Underlying Mechanisms: Humility and Credibility

Ambivalence is often considered to be weak attitude in the sense that it’s less resistant to persuasion. Based on functional theory (Shavitt 1990; Snyder and DeBono 1989), while all else being equal, messages containing arguments which match the functional bases are more persuasive and receivers show greater scrutiny compared to messages containing contents that mismatch functional bases. Thus, message matching recipients’ self-schemata lead to either increased or decreased persuasion depending on the message quality (Wheeler, Petty and Bizer, 2005). Therefore, understanding how consumers feel

ambivalent towards PE brands in general, presentation of the brand's message about its competence in ambivalent manner would match consumers' prior schemata and it would be easier for them to process the message and scrutinize the message to greater extent. As forth, consumers would likely perceive the brand to be honest and humble which could be strong antecedents of positive brand attitude. Each construct of humility and credibility would be explained in the following section.

Humility. Humility refers to “psychological quality characterized by being more humble, modest, down-to-earth, open-minded, and respectful of others” (Exline and Geyer 2011). Being humble and honest is considered as one of the significant virtue of human-beings. This makes down-play marketing tactics to be successful nowadays. In other words, consumers now perceive brand humility to be an important factor which decides one's attitude towards the brand. There are millions of different brands in this fast-changing world, and consumers are now more focused on wanting to hear about the products and less focused on superficial fancy words used simply as marketing tactics. Though no past studies to date have clearly investigated brand humility yet, as humbleness and modesty of brand is coming into practical marketing strategy, it would be worthwhile to consider perceived brand humility as a construct. The perceived humility of the brand is measured on the same scale used to measure human humility (Exline and Geyer 2004).

Credibility. Credibility is associated with factors like fairness, helpfulness and appropriateness. Credible sources result in stronger persuasion and more attitude change in positive manner. In past two-sided message studies, implementing both sides into the

message resulted in increase of attitude change due to one's enhanced credibility towards the source (Kamins and Marks 1987). One interesting finding from past study revealed that the CSR actions of luxury brand caused decline in evaluation compared other control brand's CSR communications and actions. This was due to the mismatching between the core values of luxury brands and CSR acts. The self-enhancement concept the luxury brands does not stay in line with self-transcendence concept CSR actions hold (Torelli, Monga and Kaikati 2012). Thus, luxury brands which is perceived to serve self-enhancement concept would find it hard in appealing CSR activities due to lessened credibility. Understanding how credibility is a meaningful antecedent of which that leads to positive brand evaluation, the present study considers credibility to be formulated from positive perceived brand humility. In other words, perceived humbleness of the brand would be an important antecedent of the brand to be perceived as credible.

2.4. Persuasion Knowledge

Connecting back to the functional theory explained in the previous section, one's dispositional persuasion knowledge would be a significant boundary condition in the present study. Based on one's persuasion knowledge (Friestad and Wright 1994), people go through nonconscious correction behavior when they think they have encountered a tactic with high persuasion intention. Meaning, people tend to non-consciously act in the opposite way as the persuasion tactic. Thus, understanding that every business act is a persuasion tactic to certain extent, those with high persuasion knowledge would perceive univalent presentation of the positive aspects of the brand only to have higher persuasion influence on them and more sensitive about salient

persuasion intentions. However, when the message is framed in ambivalent manner, which is different from the classic portrayal of brand information, people would less likely perceive it as a persuasion tactic and thus not go through non-conscious correction behavior. As forth, one's dispositional persuasion knowledge and prior ambivalence towards pro-environmental brands would be a significant moderator to be examined.

2.5. Hypotheses and Conceptual Model

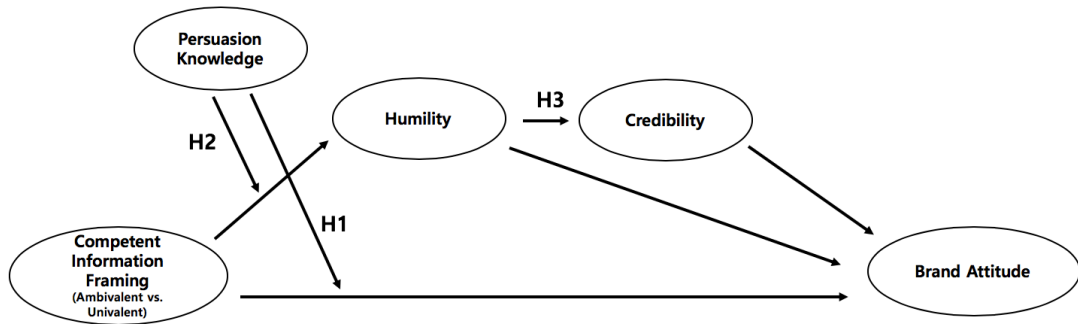
The present article has two main studies. Study 1 tests the direct interaction effect of competent information of PE brands (H1) and persuasion knowledge on brand attitude and Study 2 further develops underlying mechanisms by testing mediation and serial mediation effects (H2 and 3). More formally,

H1: Those who perceive themselves to have high (vs. low) persuasion knowledge will result in higher brand attitude when the competent information of the PE brand is presented in ambivalent (vs. univalent) manner.

H2: H1 is mediated via humility. One's initial persuasion knowledge will enhance perceived humility towards PE brand when competent information is presented in ambivalent (vs. univalent) manner.

H3: H2 is serially mediated via credibility. Higher perceived humility towards PE brand lead to higher perceived credibility.

Figure 1. Conceptual model



Due to the convenience of the research process, all the materials for the study were collected through a single online questionnaire conducted on Qualtrics. The present data consisted of 206 participants collected through different methods. 126 participants were undergraduate and graduate students at Seoul National University who came into the lab to take the online survey for compensation of \$5.00. For the rest 80 participants, the online link to the survey was given out to acquaintances of the SNU students who took part for the chance of winning \$10.00 gift card. Levene's test was conducted to test for homogeneity of variances for mediators and dependent variable for two different pools of data collection (lab vs. online) and no variance turned out to be significant. Meaning that the variances were equal across the two sets. Thus, all 206 participants were treated as one set of data throughout the study.

Chapter 3. Main Studies

3.1. Study 1

The first study was conducted to test the first hypothesis. The main interaction effect of competent information presentation of PE brand (ambivalent vs. univalent vs. no info) on brand attitude was conducted using PROCESS macro running bootstrapping

analysis with 500 samples (Model 1; Hayes, 2012). H1 predicts that competent information about PE brand presented in ambivalent manner (vs. univalent, and control) would positively influence brand attitude when one's persuasion knowledge is high (vs. low).

Method and Measures

Participants and Design. Two-hundred and six participants took part in the study, but 30 participants were eliminated from the original sample as they turned out to be outliers, leaving 176 (72 females, $M_{\text{age}} = 24.49$ years, age range: 18~36) for analysis. The entire experiment was conducted through single online Qualtrics survey. Participants were randomly assigned to one of three conditions (ambivalent vs. univalent vs. control). The online survey first introduced the participants randomly to one of the three manipulated conditions and were asked to answer questions measuring dependent variable, mediators, manipulation check, filler questions, moderator, and demographic information in order.

Independent Variables. How the competent information about pro-environmental brand is presented was the independent variable of the study. Participants were randomly assigned into one of the three manipulated conditions- ambivalent vs. univalent vs. control. Each condition showed a screenshot of a virtual pro-environmental brand ("CHINDAM"), instructing the participants that the screenshot was taken from the brand's online 'About-Us' page. All three conditions were presented with a paragraph of brand description which is highly equivalent to real pro-environmental brand's descriptions highlighting the brand's warm aspects and brand mission. The second

paragraph following the first one was different across the conditions. The ambivalent message consisted both positive and negative attitudes toward their brand's competence insisting they are both superior and inferior in the following factors which signals brand competence: expertness, experience, knowledge, qualification, skill, efficiency and competence itself. The univalent message insisted that their competence was definitely superior compared to other brands with no further explanation. The control condition were simply shown with contact details of the brand, thus no information about the competence of the brand was presented in this condition. (see Appendix A)

Dependent Variables. Immediately after reading the randomly assigned message about “Chindam,” participants were asked to rate their attitude, purchase intention, and willingness to pay on 7-point Likert scale. Participants rated their attitude towards the brand on four items (*negative/positive, bad/good, dislike/like, undesirable/desirable*; $\alpha = .916$; Crites, Fabrigar and Petty, 1994). Single question asked participants to rate purchase intention and willingness to pay each. Total of six questions were averaged to a single brand attitude scale as they showed high Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = .900$) when construct reliability was checked.

Moderator. Participants' dispositional persuasion knowledge was measured with six items adapted from Bearden, Hardesty and Rose (2001) on 7-point Likert scale. A brief definition of persuasion knowledge was provided. Moderator measure came after the manipulation check.

Mediators. Two mediators- perceived humility and credibility- were asked to be rated after completing the DV measure. The order in which the two mediators came was counterbalanced. Six items were used to measure perceived humility (Exline and Geyer, 2004) of the brand by asking how “humble/ modest/ simple/ down-to-earth/ open-minded/ careful” the brand seems ($\alpha = .694$). Five items were used to measure participants’ perceived credibility towards the brand after reading the brand’s message by asking how “dependable/ honest/ reliable/ sincere/ trustworthy” the brand seems ($\alpha = .929$) (Ohanian 1990). All the measures were rated on 7-point Likert scale (1= “not at all” to 7= “very much”).

Manipulation Check. Two manipulation check questions were asked on 7-point scale (1= “not at all” to 7= “very much”) by asking to rate whether the participant agreed to “Chindam’s message indicates both positive and negative aspects of their brand” and “after reading the message you were able to know both positive and negative aspects of the brand.” Thus, difference between the score of ambivalent condition compared to the other two conditions were expected, but the difference between univalent and control condition was not expected. The manipulation check questions were added due to the absence of pilot study. Manipulation check questions came after the mediator measures.

Results

Manipulation Check. After collecting all the dependent measures, two manipulation check questions asked participants to indicate whether they were able to acknowledge and understand both positive and negative aspects of the presented PE brand on 7-point

Likert scale (1 = “not at all” to 7 = “very much”). Participants in the ambivalent condition showed significantly higher likelihood of acknowledging and understanding both positive and negative aspects of the brand compared to univalent condition ($M_{amb} = 5.22$ vs. $M_{uni} = 2.79$; $t(187) = 19.89, p = .00$), and control condition ($M_{amb} = 5.22$ vs. $M_{noinfo} = 2.87$; $t(187) = 10.10, p = .00$) Also, as predicted, univalent and control conditions did not differ significantly on the manipulation measure score, ($M_{uni} = 2.79$ vs. $M_{noinfo} = 2.87$ $t(187) = -.34, p = .74$).

Moderation Analysis

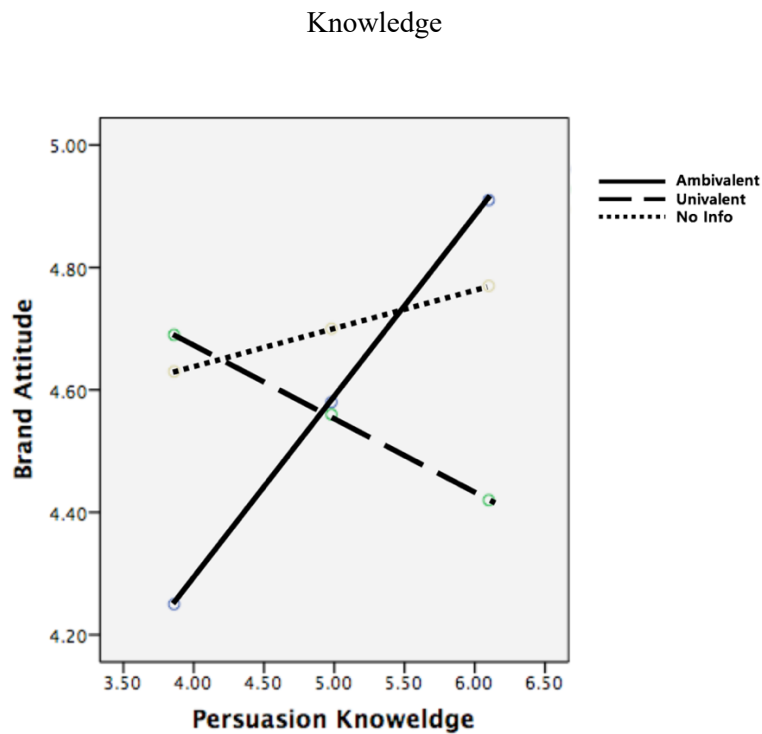
The moderation model was performed using the PROCESS macro (Model 1; Hayes, 2012), with the competent information presentation manner of PE brand (ambivalent vs. univalent vs. no info) as independent variable, brand attitude as dependent variable and participants’ dispositional persuasion knowledge as moderator.

Pairwise comparison was conducted, and the findings revealed a significant interaction effect of competent information presentation manner and persuasion knowledge on brand attitude. analyzed by pairwise comparisons of competent information presentation of PE brand. As H1 predicted, participants showed significant difference in brand attitude in ambivalent condition compared to univalent condition ($b = 2.03, SE=.90, t(170)=2.26, p = .02$) based on persuasion knowledge (see Figure 2) but did not show significant difference across conditions when ambivalent and univalent conditions were each compared to no info condition ($b = 1.25, SE=.80, t(170)=1.57, p = .12$ and $b = -.79, SE =.84, t(170)=-.93, p = .35$ respectively). To compare the dispositional persuasion knowledge, spotlight analysis was conducted at one standard

deviation above (+1SD = 6.10) and below (-1SD = 3.86) the mean (SD = 4.98).

Moreover, test of highest order unconditional interaction showed significant effect only when ambivalent and univalent conditions were considered as manipulated conditions (($F(1,110) = 4.87, p = .03$) but not significant when no information condition was considered as a condition ($F(2,170) = 2.83, p = .06$). Thus, in the next study, no information condition would be omitted from the independent variable conditions.

Figure 2. Interaction Effect of Competent Information Presentation and Persuasion



Discussion

Study 1 first examined the interaction effect of competent information presentation and persuasion knowledge on brand attitude. The result showed when the

competent information is given in ambivalent manner, as one's dispositional persuasion knowledge plays a significant role in controlling the brand attitude. Thus, H1 was supported. In other words, when dispositional persuasion knowledge is one standard deviation above the mean ambivalent condition is likely to show more positive brand attitude but when persuasion knowledge is one standard deviation below the mean, univalent condition is more likely to result in positive brand attitude. However, there is no difference across persuasion knowledge level on brand attitude when no information is provided. Thus, in the next part of the study, no information condition was no longer considered, leaving the comparison between the ambivalent and univalent condition only. The next part further examines the underlying mechanisms by conducting moderated mediation based on the results in the study 1.

3.2. Study 2

The second study was conducted to test H2 and H3 by conducting moderated mediation and moderated serial mediation respectively by using PROCESS macro (Model 8, 85; Hayes, 2012). H2 predicts that the ambivalent condition would result in high brand attitude as persuasion knowledge increases via participants' perceived humility of the PE brand ((competent information framing x persuasion knowledge) → humility → brand attitude). Moreover, H3 further predicts that the perceived humility leads to greater perceived credibility which serially mediates the effect ((competent information framing x persuasion knowledge) → humility → credibility → brand attitude). Since the participants and study design are congruent to the first part, methods

and procedure would be omitted.

Results

Moderated Mediation Analysis. PROCESS Model 8 was used with ambivalent vs. univalent condition as independent variable, brand attitude as dependent variable, persuasion knowledge as moderator and humility as mediator. The index of moderated mediation showed a significant interaction effect of competent information presentation and persuasion knowledge on brand attitude via perceived humility ($b = -.109$, $SE = .04$, 95% CI $[-.239, -.010]$). More specifically spotlight analysis of Johnson-Neyman showed the interaction effect was significant at persuasion knowledge score above 4.55. Thus, interaction effect of indirect effect via humility was significant when persuasion knowledge was at its mean ($b = -.22$, $SE = .08$, 95% CI $[-.40, -.07]$) and one standard deviation above the mean ($b = -.39$, $SE = .13$, 95% CI $[-.67, -.16]$), but not at one standard deviation below the mean ($b = -.04$, $SE = .10$, 95% CI $[-.26, .15]$). Perceived humility had significant positive effect on brand attitude ($b = .51$, $SE = .10$, $t(169) = 5.21$, $p = .00$).

Moderated Serial Mediation Analysis. PRCOESS Model 85 with ambivalent vs. univalent condition as independent variable, persuasion knowledge as moderator, perceived humility and credibility as two serial mediators was used to test H3. The index of moderated mediation of the serial mediation model was significant ($b = -.06$, $SE = .03$, 95% CI $[-.13, -.01]$). More specifically, spotlight analysis showed significant interaction effect of indirect effect via humility and credibility respectively when persuasion

knowledge was at mean ($b = -.08$, $SE = .04$, 95% CI $[-.17, -.02]$) and one standard deviation above the mean ($b = -.14$, $SE = .06$, 95% CI $[-.29, -.04]$), but not at one standard deviation below the mean ($b = -.02$, $SE = .14$, 95% CI $[-.11, .06]$). Perceived humility and credibility had significant positive effect on brand attitude ($b = .33$, $SE=.11$, $t(168)=3.05$, $p = .00$ / $b = .28$, $SE=.08$, $t(168)=3.60$, $p = .00$ respectively). Perceived humility showed significant positive effect on perceived credibility as well ($b = .65$, $SE=.09$, $t(169)=6.99$, $p = .00$).

Discussion

Study 2 examined the moderated mediation and serial mediation via perceived humility and credibility. Though perceived credibility towards the brand leading to positive brand attitude has been examined in past studies (Kamins and Marks 1987, Torelli et al. 2012), perceived humility leading to positive brand attitude lacks in empirical findings. The result showing that perceived humility is considered to be a meaning antecedent of perceived credibility towards the information source opens up the significance of humble brands in future studies. Those with high dispositional persuasion knowledge perceived the brand to be highly humble when the competent information about the brand was presented in ambivalent manner (vs univalent manner) and this thought had positive effect on perceived credibility and attitude towards the brand. Thus, H2 and H3 were supported.

Chapter 4. General Discussion

4.1. Theoretical and Practical Implications

The purpose of the present study was to reveal an effective way of promoting PE brand from the perspective of presenting competent information of the brand in most appealing way. One's initial persuasion knowledge played a significant role in whether a specific way of appealing PE brand's competent information would result in positive brand attitude or not. The result supported H1 by revealing that those with high persuasion knowledge build positive brand attitude when competent information presented in ambivalent manner. On the other hand, those with low persuasion knowledge simply showed positive brand attitude when the message presented univalent competent information. Those with no prior knowledge about the marketer's purpose of influencing the consumers did not seem find the brands' message emphasizing only the positive aspects to be questionable. However, those who are more sensitive regarding the marketers' purpose were more likely to find ambivalent brand message to be more honest and trustful. This probably would be due to the ease of information processing. Those who already adapt questionable attitude towards the brands' promotional messages would find it easier to understand the ambivalent message because it matches their prior thoughts. People often possess more positive attitude towards something that's more understandable and easier to appreciate.

The present findings of the study could aid in filling the gap in studying the antecedents in building true positive brand attitude which could effectively lead on to actual purchase behavior. Since the brand attitude in the present study also considered

one's purchase intention and willingness to pay, the brand attitude measured would be highly likely to result in behavioral outcome as well.

While perceived credibility or sincerity towards brand has been considered in past studies, the construct of perceived brand humility has not been considered in past studies. Observing brand from personality perspective, it seems worthwhile to consider brand humility to be an effective construct in measuring one aspect of brand personality. As downplaying and humble marketing is being highly valued in practical level these days, understanding how PE brand's perceived humility influences brand attitude would be a meaningful finding. Moreover, ambivalence and univalence is usually examined as human attitude. However, understanding how the attitude performed through the brands' message could influence brand attitude based on various consumers' boundary levels is a meaningful finding not only for the PE brand but for other general brands as well.

One interesting finding and insight from the present research is that the direct effect of the interaction between message framing and persuasion knowledge did not have significant effect on credibility. The credibility construct was only significant through serial mediation with humility as a preceding construct. If PE brand is considered to be a highly warm brand, consumers may expect them to show modesty and humility which are considered to be a virtue of a human-being. Thus, meeting the perceived humility level to certain extent would be a core requirement in order to be gain credibility. In other words, being credible would mean to being humble when it comes to PE brands. This is an interesting finding which signals a unique feature of PE brand that may differ from other neutral brands.

Since we now live in the middle of overwhelming information with too many

advertisements, it's now time for the brand messages to show more human like attitudes and communicate with more honesty. Consumers are becoming smarter and now expect some sincere and trustable information rather than fancy words which only emphasize the good stuff. Brands are too busy emphasizing their strengths only.

4.2. Limitations and Future Directions

This study has several limitations. First of all, although the manipulation check showed that the virtual brand page was successful in manipulating the conditions, the present study must be replicated with real brands. Participants may have showed less positive attitude towards the brand as the brands' name has never been heard of. Thus, participants may have formed biased attitude in advance thinking that the presented brand is inferior in general.

Second, since the entire study was done through an online survey link, participants may have not fully concentrated on the details of the messages. It would be meaningful to thoroughly conduct a pilot test in future. Moreover, though purchase intention and willingness to pay were measured together with the attitude, it would be worth to conduct the present study in field experiment to actually observe consumers' desire to purchase or purchase action. Also, if the present research is to be conducted in field, the competent information of the brand could be conveyed in person through the salesperson instead of it being showed in text format. Face to face interaction would make a difference and even be more accurate in delivering the ambivalent and univalent attitude. Not only, it would be worthwhile to examine the product category as a significant moderator. Some may be more likely to purchase from PE brands if the

product could be examined by others (e.g., clothes, fashion items etc.) but less likely if it's for their private goods (e.g., shampoo, soap, furniture etc.).

Future studies in findings effective ways of promoting PE brands would need to be continued. Despite the public's general concern towards environmental issues, not many people are aware of such brands and the potential values such brands could bring to life. PE brands should more actively implement various marketing strategies to turn into successful businesses. Other constructs such as humor and awe would also be worth studying. However, whichever constructs one brings into the model, boundary conditions of the consumer must always be considered.

Moreover, the present study could be replicated with casual brands as well. Since many neutral brands nowadays rigorously invest in CSR acts and consider societal values in building brand reputation, the present study's construct could be extended to neutral brands. In this way, the present finding considering perceived humility towards the brand derived from brand's ambivalent attitude in promoting their brand could be generalized to greater extent.

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Appendix A

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About usSalesMenWomenKidsAccessoryStyleAsk

Story



친담

멋지고도 실용적이며 지속가능 할 수 있을까





#우리 이야기_한땀한땀 한코한코

우리의 지구를 되살리기 위한 사업, '친담' 입니다. 최근 미세먼지가 심각해지면서 환경오염에 대한 심각성은 더욱 고조되고 있습니다. 따라서 저희는, 변화를 만들기 위해 친환경 패션을 리드하고자 합니다. 원단 선택부터 유통, 폐기까지 환경에 해를 입히지 않는 방식을 고민하는 '친담' 단순 옷 을 넘어 지속 가능한 라이프스타일을 설계하고 꿈꿉니다. 불필요한 환경 피해를 최소화 하고자, 우리의 사업행위에서 어떻게 변화할 수 있을지 끊임없이 고민하고, 이를 사회와 공유합니다.

#우리 이야기_최고의 제품 만들기

'친담' 은 브랜드 기술력 부분에서는 확실한 지식과 전문성을 지녔지만, 효율성 면에서는 타 일반 기업 제품들에 비해 조금 부족합니다. 환경을 생각하다 보니 소재와 제조과정에 비용이 더 투입되어, 일반 브랜드에 비해 가격이 비싸다고 인식될 수 있습니다. 또한, 기능성과 내구성이 아직은 부족하지만, 확실한 성장성을 지닌 '친담' 입니다. 타 브랜드에 비해 모든 경쟁력 부분에 앞서고 있진 않지만, 환경에 피해를 주지 않으며 재활용이 가능한 제품을 만들것입니다.



Ambivalent condition

#우리 이야기_최고의 제품 만들기
 ‘친담’은 브랜드 기술력, 지식, 전문성, 효율성,
 기능성, 성장성, 경쟁력 등 모든 부분에서
 타 일반 기업 보다 월등합니다.
 경쟁력과 따뜻한 친환경 이미지를 모두 갖춘
 브랜드로서, 환경에 피해를 주지 않으며,
 재활용이 가능한 제품을 만들것입니다.



Univalent Condition

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No Info (control) Condition

Abstract in Korean

친환경 브랜드의 양방향 감정 메시지 홍보 효과

성명: 송승연

서울대학교 대학원 경영학과

최근 환경에 대한 소비자 인식과 사회적 이슈에서 나아가 본 연구는 친환경 브랜드의 제품 경쟁력에 대한 정보를 효과적으로 홍보하기 위한 방법을 알아본다. 일반 브랜드와 달리 친환경 브랜드는 환경을 보호한다는 사회적 책임으로 비롯된 따뜻한 이미지를 갖고 있지만, 제품의 품질 등을 포함한 경쟁력 차원에서는 타 브랜드에 비해 다소 부족하다는 소비자 인식이 존재한다. 따라서 친환경 브랜드에 있어 브랜드 경쟁력을 소비자들에게 전달하는 것은 매우 중요한 이슈이다. 이에 있어 본 연구는 브랜드 경쟁력에 대한 홍보 메시지의 태도가 소비자가 결과적으로 갖게 되는 브랜드 태도에 영향을 줄 것으로 예상하였다. 또한, 개인의 설득지식 수준에 따라 브랜드의 홍보 메시지를 받아들이는 데 영향을 주게 되므로 중요한 조절 효과로 예상했다. 본 연구의 결과에 따르면 소비자의 설득지식 수준이 높을수록 브랜드 경쟁력에 대한 양방향의 태도를 보이는 홍보 메시지는 결과적인 브랜드 태도에 긍정적인 영향을 주었다. 자신의 브랜드에 대하여 무조건 옹호하지 않으며 부족한 점을 인지하고 솔직하게 이야기하는 메시지의 양방향 감정이 드러나는 태도는 소비자들로 하여금 브랜드를 겸손하다고 여겨지며 이는 곧 브랜드에 대한 신뢰로 이어지기 때문이다.

Keywords: 양방향 감정, 설득지식, 브랜드 겸손함, 브랜드 신뢰성, 친환경 브랜드

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